

REMARKS

In the Office Action, claim 13 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. Claims 1-4, 6, 7, 11-16 and 18 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Lady (U.S. Pat. Pub. No. 2004/0000273). Claim 17 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Lady in view of AAPA.

In response to the final rejection, claim 1 has been amended to specify that the first attachment ring moves *along the length of the strap* (instead of “therealong”) in the direction in which the leading strap is pulled, and to incorporate the stabilizing link and cinch ring from present claims 3 and 6 (which are now cancelled).

The Examiner’s rejection over Lady relies heavily on hindsight and that in some cases the Examiner is working backwards to try to equate features from the harness of Lady with the features of claim 1, even though the features of the harness in Lady are clearly not suitable for the claimed function.

In the harness of Lady, the first attachment ring (15) on the chest strap is clearly fixed in place on the chest strap and will not move along the chest strap when the leading strap is pulled to one side of the animal during use. On the other hand, in the harness of the present invention the ring is free to slide along the chest strap.

Claim 1 has been amended to specify that in the harness of the present invention, the first attachment ring slides *along the length* of the chest strap instead of the equivalent “therealong” so that this distinction is clearer. The provision of an attachment ring that slides along the chest strap has an important advantage, since it means that when the leading strap is pulled in a sideways direction, the force is transmitted more gently to the animal, rather than as a sudden jerking motion.

Claim 1 of the present invention additionally requires the provision of a second attachment ring on the back strap of the harness. The Examiner asserts that this feature is provided by the buckle (18) on the back strap of the Lady harness, but this assertion seems to rely on hindsight rather than being based on the teaching of Lady. The buckle 18 is clearly not an attachment ring that is intended for the attachment of a second leading strap, nor is the buckle even suitable for this purpose. There is absolutely no reason why one of ordinary skill in the art looking at Lady would consider the purpose of the buckle to be anything other than as a length adjuster for the back strap.

Lady certainly makes no suggestion of leading an animal by applying pressure to the back, nor does it make any suggestion of leading an animal using two leading straps which are connected to the chest and back of the harness. The use of two leading straps provides far greater control over the animal and allows the animal to

be guided rather than pulled in a certain direction. In this regard, the harness of the present invention offers a significant improvement over prior art harnesses.

As set out above, the features of the stabilizing link and cinch ring have also been incorporated into claim 1 from claims 3 and 6 which were originally eventually dependent on claim 1, and these are important features of the invention. Contrary to the Examiner's assertions, there is nothing in the harness of Lady that corresponds to the claimed combination of the stabilizing link and cinch ring.

In particular, there is no disclosure or suggestion in Lady of providing a cinch ring, as in the harness of the present invention. The Examiner once again refers to a buckle (19) of the Lady harness which is intended only as a length adjuster. The buckle (19) is not attached to any stabilizing link in the harness, as required by amended claim 1, nor is it suitable for functioning as a cinch ring. It is clear that the cinch ring arrangement of the present invention is entirely different to the more basic arrangement in the Lady harness and that as a result the harnesses transmit the force from the leading strap to the animal in an entirely different way.

In summary, the harness of Lady does not include a number of the features required by amended claim 1. It seems clear that the incorporation of these features into the harness of the present invention leads to a genuine improvement in the control of an animal as well as the comfort of the animal. Harnesses having the

features of amended claim 1 are marketed in the US under the HALTI trademark and these harnesses were the first marketed product to provide the dual attachment points, which have proved very effective and popular.

In view of the arguments set out above, it is hoped that the Examiner will be able to appreciate the technical contribution made by the present invention and will reconsider the rejections and find the amended claim 1 to be new and non-obvious.

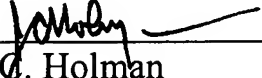
In relation to the claim rejection under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, claim 13 has only been amended to specifically refer to the chest strap, back strap and lower strap of the earlier claims.

Based on the foregoing amendments and remarks, it is respectfully submitted that the present application should now be in condition for allowance. A Notice of Allowance is in order, and such favorable action and reconsideration are respectfully requested.

However, if after reviewing the above amendments and remarks, the Examiner has any questions or comments, he is cordially invited to contact the undersigned attorneys.

Respectfully submitted,

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